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*The CHRISTIAN's Concern that he  
may not be a Cast-away :*

Exemplified in the  
**CONDUCT of the Apostle PAUL.**  
BEING TWO  
**DISCOURSES**  
ON  
**I COR. ix. 27.**

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Price Eight-pence.

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BEING TWO

DISCOURSES

ON

I COR. ix. 27.

PUBLISHED

With a View to prevent a growing Indulgence to the Pleasures of Sense, to the Prejudice of vital and practical Religion.

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BY

BENJAMIN WALLIN.

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*Let not Sin therefore reign in your mortal Body, that ye should obey it in the Lusts thereof, Rom. vi. 12.*

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MDCCLXV.

The CHRISTIAN; or, Christian Triumphant  
The way made a City-Wall:

Tranlated by Dr.

Conditions of the Abolition PAUL

binding TWO

DISCOURSES



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PUBLISHED

With a View to promote a following Duty  
Series to the Pleasures of Taste, or the  
Privileges of Art and Literary-Region.

B.Y

BENJAMIN WALLIN

and the like Subjects in the same manner, may be sold  
at the same Price, and in the same Manner, as the  
Books in the same Price, and in the same Manner.

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1800.

## P R E F A C E.

**T H E**

## P R E F A C E.

**T**HE substance of the ensuing pages was delivered at a monthly exercise, at the Rev. Mr. *Larwell's* meeting, in *Limehouse*, in *August* last, when a publication was desired. I then designed to revise and enlarge on the subject, with a view to subjoin it to a work before me, at the request of some friends, (a proposal for which, God willing, may shortly be made) and therefore declined it: but having since reviewed and prepared it for the press, I am persuaded, for several reasons, to let it appear by itself.

**A**

Scripture

Scripture and experience abundantly shew, that in every age there have been licentious and disorderly persons under the most sacred profession; and in a world of wickedness, in which the best are attended with sin and temptation, and are liable to fall, it is at any time easy to find notorious instances of folly, and to cry out of the badness of the times: but it would be more to the purpose if each one would examine his own heart, and look to his own ways, that, like the Apostle, he might become an example to those around him. For my own part I blush for myself, yet hope it is not indecent, in my station, to take a fit opportunity of exciting others, with my own soul, to an holy vigilance, and to remind them of the danger we are all in.

Though an haughty, selfish, and immoral professor is here and there seen, I am not of opinion that pride, covetousness, or intemperance, are the vices which now reign; but it is too plain, and as much to be lamented,

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mented, that we are generally fallen into a manner of living which consists not with zeal either in private devotion, family religion, or a constant attendance on the service of the sanctuary. There seems a great thirst after the honours and pleasures of life; in pursuit of which, many are, in all appearance, carried away to an almost total neglect of every means appointed to mortify the deeds of the body: and the pleasures of life, we are assured, by the testimony of God, are the bane of religion; for he that lives in them, is expressly declared to be DEAD WHILE HE LIVETH.

I mean not to condemn a sober enjoyment of any good creature; nor do I think a moderate recreation incompatible with a life of piety and holiness, much less would I insinuate that the indulgencies peculiar to an affluent state, are more inconsistent with the self-denial recommended, than those common to persons of inferior circumstances. It is happy for the interest of religion in general,

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ral, and reflects a true honour on themselves, when the rich in this world take the lead of their brethren in a conversation becoming the gospel; their number indeed is small, yet religion is not confined to the poor, nay, to speak the truth, without any compliment, there are instances, even among those who are at least comparatively rich, wherein there is a greater appearance of real godliness than in many who receive of their bounty: and the man who finds fault with his superior for enjoying what he with honour possesseth, or for living up to his condition, is either extremely ignorant, or betrays a spirit that may shew the wisdom of providence in placing him beneath the power of rendering his censures injurious. It impeached not the *Ethiopian* treasurer's true piety that he rode in his chariot; but it was much to his honour that his carriage was employed in bringing him up to the house of the Lord: Nor can I forbear to observe, that his reading the scripture, on his return from divine worship, is an example highly worthy

worthy the imitation of Christians of every rank, though I fear omitted by many.

The grand point in a life of faith is, in a dependence on the grace and righteousness of the Saviour, to copy after the Apostle: without this, whether rich or poor, a man's religion is vain; it answers not to the declared end of the grace of God in choosing and redeeming his people, that they might be holy and without blame before him in love; and it is no other than a contradiction to the hope of our calling, which is to an undefiled inheritance, not to fight against sin. So that amidst all the allowances to be made for any in this imperfect state, it must be asserted, that he who is not purifying himself, in the prospect of life everlasting, is not in the way to glory.

It will not be strange if this attempt should be treated by some with scorn and reproach. "There is nothing in the world, saith the great Dr. Owen\*, more generally despised,

\* See the Doctor's preface to his discourse on the Spirit.

## P R E F A C E.

despised, as foolish and contemptible, than the things that are spoken of, and ascribed to the Spirit of God." And the like may be said of the subject before us, which stands in connexion therewith; for through the Spirit alone a believer can succeed in his warfare with sin. I fear the times are not mended with us, in respect of a serious regard to points of experience, since the days of that eminent light in the church: and it is no wonder that he who concerns himself with them, and presumes to avow that walking in the Spirit is essential to the christian character, and pleads for the necessity of mortifying the flesh, should, as the Doctor further observes, " forfeit his reputation with many, as a person fanatical, and estranged from the conduct of reason." But it is hoped that the uncivil reflections of critical men, who take upon them to censure every performance that favours of spiritual things, and the distinguishing truths of the gospel, will not prevent the diligence of those who are called to defend them, or the acceptance

of

of their labours with such who know the scriptures and the power of God.

I shall only add, that the Reader may be assured that nothing is farther from the design of this piece than personal reflection, or to direct his eye to any particular society or denomination of Christians; for if our declensions from a zeal against sin are general, there can be no sufficient ground for this kind of jealousy; and if a remarkable deficiency among the dear people immediately under my own care, was my chief motive to entering on this subject, the making public my thoughts upon it, might justly be deemed very impertinent. However, I heartily wish, that all who are in the churches of Christ may obtain mercy to follow the noble example in the text, that no one may at last be a cast-away, but that each may be crowned in the day of the Lord.



# SERMON I.

*The CHRISTIAN's concern that he  
may not be a cast-away, &c.*

**1 COR. ix. 27.**

*But I keep under my body, and bring it into sub-  
jection; lest that by any means, when I have  
preached to others, I myself should be a cast-  
away.*

**S**ELF-DENIAL is ungrateful to the flesh; but however distasteful the very doctrine of it may be to some nominal Christians, yet certain it is that without self-denial, in this sinful state, there can be no christianity or real religion; and the scripture is plain, *If ye live after the flesh ye shall die.* It is therefore a subject of great importance, and always seasonable; but especially when pleasures abound, as they do at this day, and many, through sensual indulgence, are warping in Zion.

In

2 *The CHRISTIAN's concern*

In the text we find an eminent minister of Jesus wisely improving his office as a preacher into an argument for his maintaining the conflict of a Christian, and proposing himself an example to the faithful of every rank. After reciting his commendations to all for the gospel's sake, that he might have the pleasure and joy of sharing with them in the blessings of grace, the Apostle proceeds to stir up the *Corinthians* to diligence and ardor in their holy profession; [ver. 24.] *Know ye not, saith he, that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run that ye may obtain.* Where he alludes, as in the passage before us, to certain games, which were held by public authority in *Greece*, and were well known to the *Corinthians*, in which certain persons encountered each other in racing, wrestling, fighting, and such-like exploits; he observes that *every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things.* He used moderation in his diet, and abstained from every thing tending to enervate his strength, or to unfit his body in any degree for the engagement; and, what was his motive? *Now they do it, saith the Apostle, to obtain a corruptible crown.* Had their crowns been of gold the observation was just, but the laurels provided on these occasions, though highly honourable, were composed of herbs and flowers that soon fade away:

For

that he may not be a cast-away, &c. 3

For so trifling a gain they humbled themselves; but we, Christians, run and fight for an incorruptible crown, and shall we shun any self-denial required in the way to obtain it?

Some preach up mortification to others, who, at the same time, notoriously indulge themselves. Not so the holy Apostle; no; what he prescribed to the disciples of Jesus he practised: *I therefore, saith he, so run, not as uncertainly: adnau;*, i. e. say some, not *undistinguished*; alluding to the eye of the judge, and the numerous spectators who on these occasions usually attended; he ran before God, angels, and men, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearance and kingdom: A like allusion we have in *Hebrews xii. 1. Wherfore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnessses, let us lay aside every weight, and run with patience the race that is set before us.* Or this expression may be applied to the object or prize, of which he was certain; though I rather think that this manner of running is chiefly intended; *I run not as uncertainly, i. e. not heedlessly, or without regard to the lines of direction, but strictly adhering to the rules prescribed in the stadium on course.* The Apostle, conscious of the eyes that were upon him, ran justly and with the utmost care,

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and not in a presumptuous and disorderly way, after the manner of some, who do well to consider that no man is *crowned except he strive lawfully*, [2 Tim. ii. 5.] He proceeds: *So fight I, not as one that beateth the air*, q. d. Mine is not a feigned combat, like those exercises by which men prepare themselves for battle: No; I am not fighting against a shadow, but am actually and warmly engaged with a real and powerful enemy; behold, *I keep under my body and bring it into subjection*. So run and so fight that ye may obtain. Two things in general are to be noted in this account which the Apostle gives of himself; namely, his *conduct* and his *motive* thereto. I shall consider each, and proceed to improve a subject which is more or less verified in the experience of every true Christian. And,

I. The conduct of the Apostle, or how he was engaged, And here we are to observe the *enemy* and the *manner* in which he is treated. The *enemy* is no other than *bis body*. Many are the enemies of the faithful in this militant state; but in the instance before us we see a believer, as it were, at war with himself, and fighting against his own body, which to some may seem strange; but this is the fact. *I keep under my body*. *No*

thing can be further from truth or common sense, than to understand the Apostle of his natural body, as though he treated his own proper flesh in the manner described: The mortification required in real religion, is in no degree absurd or unnatural. Some think that this body signifies the appetites of sense, which, say they, the Apostle was careful to subdue; and no doubt a denial of fleshly lusts is a main thing included. It has been more generally interpreted of the old man, styled the body of sin, nor can it with reason be questioned that he aimed at the destruction of sin that warred in his members; both ideas are included. The Apostle no doubt intends self-mortification; and it is worthy of notice, that what he declares is not of this or the other member, but of *his body*; so that he had an eye upon every faculty and part of himself, and with respect to the body of sin he was impartial and universal; it was not *this* or *that* evil passion he opposed and subdued, but every lust of the flesh and the mind. But in what manner did he treat this body, or himself in proportion to the prevalency of his flesh? He declares, *I keep under my body and bring it into subjection.* These agonitical phrases suit the representation in the text, which we are now to survey,   
 and

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and who can fail of discerning the picture? Here is plainly before us the figure of a champion, who, having wrestled or fought with success, holds under his adversary, and with great resolution and courage, bruiseth and beateth him down, that he may not recover and rise up against him, but that he may be still more humbled until he is entirely subdued. In this striking light the Apostle presents himself, and whoever is engaged in the christian warfare will in some degree answer thereto. It is further to be noted, that he speaks of this as his constant and universal practice; a practice in which he was resolved to persevere to the end. His language implies, that in every period and state of life, wherever he was, or however employed in other respects, he continued thus to keep under the flesh; nor is there any situation in the present world, however comparatively advantageous, in which it is safe to suspend this holy opposition to the body of sin; as may hereafter appear.

I think it is universally agreed that *πτωμα* properly signifies to strike on the face, the usual practice of combatants against their adversary when down; so that the Apostle, in saying *he kept under his body*, alludes not to the temperance of them who strove for the mastery by way of preparation, but to the practice of the champion, on the face or body of his antagonist.

that he may not be a cast-away, &c. 7

This is the mystery of the Apostle's extraordinary assertion: *I keep under my body.* He is not to be taken in a literal sense, nor doth he intend any thing like that base destruction of the flesh, practised by the *Romanists*, by fastings and scourgings, and other methods of macerating animal nature imposed by their leaders, which are carnal and vain; for alas! while the natural body is brought down by these cruel superstitions, the body of sin, which the Apostle intends, and which every Christian keeps under, remains unsubdued; yea, by this means the flesh is frequently pampered, and the man puffed up with an haughty conceit of his merit in the sight of God, who will have none to glory in his presence: Far from any thing so absurd and carnal; the Apostle refers to the old man, which is corrupt according to its deceitful lusts, and it was his body in this spiritual sense he kept under and brought into subjection; a mortification highly rational, and of the utmost importance, which leads,

II. To enquire into his motive. With what view did the Apostle thus hold himself under? With a view becoming a man and a Christian. His motive was just, and there was the highest reason for his acting this part. He so fought,

left,

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left, saith he, *that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away.* And what reason more important could be assigned? In this clause we have his character as a preacher introduced, the propriety and advantage of which may justly be admired: when the exercises referred to were at hand, an herald, or cryer was employed to publish the conditions and rules of the game, and the appointed reward, with every motive to animate the resolution and vigor of those who engaged; and how similar this to the business of gospel-ministers is easy to discern; and no less obvious is the disparity between them: These heralds were mere officers, and had no concern in the event; but the preachers of the word are themselves entered for the prize they set before others: hence resulted the concern of the Apostle; whose character as a preacher must greatly aggravate his falling short of the crown: *I keep under my body, saith he, lest I myself should be a cast-away;* i. e., lest I myself should be disapproved and rejected in the end, and so lose the prize, and be covered with shame. The word *adscriptus* rendered a *cast-away*, we sometimes read *reprobate*; as in [2 Cor. xiii. 5.] *Know ye not your own selves how that Jesus Christ is in you except ye be reprobates?* It stands opposed, not to the election of God but

that he may not be a cast-away, &c. 9  
but to real character, and implies an unsoundness or want of sincerity under a profession, in which case the person, however specious his pretence may have been, will be cast away when he is judged; for the hope of the hypocrite will certainly perish. The expression either alludes to the practice of a gold-smith, who in his assaying pieces of silver, casts aside those which on trial are found below standard; thus the prophet *Jeremiah* declares, [chap. vi. 30.] *Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them.* Or rather, according to the figure in the text, here is an allusion to the judgment of those in whose sight the prize-masters strove. It is becoming a Christian to approve himself to all that behold him; he should so run, and so fight that none may justly condemn him, for even the testimony of man to our walk with God is not to be despised; indeed he who hath the rejoicing, of a good conscience, under the evil surmisings of censorious persons, may, with *Paul*, say, *with me it is a very small thing to be judged with man's judgment.* Nevertheless, the man who despiseth a just reproof of his brother, or the righteous censure of the church, betrays a singular hardness of heart, and appears like a reprobate. But the expression seems rather to refer to the judge of the games,

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who rejected those who had not fairly won, as unworthy of the reward: and the Apostle hath a principal, if not a sole regard to the judgment of the Lord. This is the concern of all true believers, [2 Cor. v. 9.] *We labour that whether present or absent we may be accepted of him.* They who strove for the mastery, kept in view the end of their course, and were concerned to obtain the decision of the judge in their favour: In like manner the Apostle was careful not to be a cast-away, when he had preached to others, *i. e.* finished his ministry, which extended with his life. It is plain, therefore, that his great concern was that he might not be denied of the Lord at his coming, when he shall judge the quick and the dead, and every one shall be crowned or rejected. This was the earnest care of the Apostle, and for this he gave diligence, and with an eye on all sides kept under his flesh, beating down and bringing the old man into subjection, lest, saith he, *by any means*, *i. e.* by means of any lust, at any time, by any instrument, or under any temptation whatever, he should be overcome, and cast out among them who fall short of the promise.

This holy concern and resolution in the christian warfare, is so far from being inconsistent with a believer's hope of succeeding, that a certain

that he may not be a cast-away, &c. 11

tain prospect of subduing the flesh is a motive to the fight; and accordingly, when we are exhorted that sin should not reign in our mortal bodies to obey it in the lusts thereof, it is added, by way of encouragement, *Sin shall not have dominion over you*, [Rom. vi. 12, 14.] So that Christians are more than conquerors through him that hath loved them; the Captain of their salvation is before them, and they are sure that the enemy shall not finally prevail, insomuch that in the midst of all their danger and toil in the battle, there is ground to rejoice with gratitude and triumph, saying, *Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!* [1 Cor. xv. 57.] At the same time, the casting-away of those who give out through unbelief, and shall be found servants of corruption, hath a just and great influence on the believer to excite his zeal against sin, and fill him with a bold resolution not to give place to his body. Thus was the Apostle continually engaged; he not only preached up the importance of mortifying the flesh, but, being called by grace, practised the same on himself; and this not from a tormenting fear that he should perish at last; No; he knew that by faith he should stand, and was persuaded, that in the name of the Lord he should conquer; nevertheless he deprecated the

shame and misery of those, who after all their profession, being found transgressors, shall be cast away in the day of judgment; and this, among other considerations, inspired him with a resolution to keep under and bring down the enemy, until he was entirely subdued. In all which he is an example to those who would enter the kingdom of heaven; and from the representation which the apostle here makes of himself, with a view to animate all true believers, the following particulars may be noted.

I. That his own salvation and happiness should be the chief concern of every man. Self-preservation is a first principle in nature, and it is not destroyed by grace; real religion requires it; nor can any thing discharge a man from the care of his soul. Self-denial is needful for the sake of others, in the characters of parents and masters, and still more so in that of ministers of Christ, but no man, in any relation of life whatever, is or can be obliged to care for another to the ruin of himself: On the contrary, it is the indispensable duty of each one in every station to be sollicitous above all things for his own acceptance with God and eternal felicity. In this respect the care of one's self is of universal concern, to promote which is one grand design

*that he may not be a cast-away, &c.* 13

design of religious institution: for instance, the office of a gospel-minister terminates in this; his whole business among the people committed to his charge is to see that every man takes care of himself; with this view he takes the oversight of the flock, that by his inspection, doctrine, and example, each may press toward the mark, and, persevering in holiness, obtain the prize of his calling. The end of that care which thy minister hath over thee, O Christian, is that thou shouldst work out thine own salvation, therefore be not slothful, but a follower of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. Again, a gospel minister has the charge of himself. This office is established with a view to save sinners, not to the exclusion of him, invested therewith, and he who is entrusted with this divine charge should take heed of that sorrowful reflection, [Cant. i. 6.] *They have made me the keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept!* What would it profit a preacher to gain the whole world, or to be an instrument of saving every sinner unto whom he is sent, and lose his *own soul*? Nor is a servant of the Lord barely to keep in view his own salvation, but from the exhortation of Paul to Timothy, [1 epis. iv. 16.] we learn that this ought to be his first concern in the

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discharge of his office. Take heed to thyself and  
to thy doctrine; continue in them; for in doing  
this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that bear  
thee. Sincere and disinterested compassion for  
the souls of others is essential to a meetness for  
the work of the ministry, but this sublime  
generosity is so far from being incompatible  
with a man's chief concern for himself, that it  
cannot with reason be supposed to exist without  
it. Can a man have a just esteem for immortal  
souls and despise his own soul? Or is it possible  
that the principle on which any one is inspired  
with zeal for the happiness of others should not  
at least be as effectual to excite in him a regard  
for his own? I presume it impossible. Indeed  
we find *Paul* in his zeal for the salvation of his  
kinsmen, the *Jews*, express himself thus: *For*  
*I could wish myself were accursed from Christ for*  
*my brethren, &c.* [Rom. ix. 3.] It may be  
thought difficult to ascertain the precise meaning  
of the Apostle in this declaration, but of this  
we are certain, he intends not that he could be  
satisfied without an interest in Christ, or to be  
cast out by him into everlasting misery; this  
would be a flat contradiction to what he asserts  
in the text, and in itself absurd and abomina-  
ble, for nothing can be more unnatural or  
base

*that he may not be a cast-away, &c.* 15  
base than for a man, under any pretence whatever, to neglect his own salvation. But again,

II. Note. Some who set out under a profession of christianity and enter the lists for glory will in the end be denied, and fall short of heaven. This awful remark, which is grounded in the reason of the text, is not to be shunned. It is true the righteous shall hold on his way, and obtain the reward; nor does it at all follow from the concern of the Apostle that he, or that any true believer shall be rejected and perish; but if no one, who would seem to enter on a contest for the prize in the character of a Christian, or even under that of a gospel-minister, was in danger of being a cast-away, this care would be altogether needless. But we know that there are hypocrites in *Zion* of every character; tares will be permitted to grow up with the wheat till the harvest, when, being separated, their end is to be burned with unquenchable fire, [Mat. xiii. 30.] In all the descriptions given us of the judgment by Christ at his coming, the scene is laid in the christian world; the *Heathens* shall be judged, but they are not immediately intended in these representations of our Lord; every one tried is considered as having sat under the sound of the gospel, and appears with a pretence of belonging

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ing to Jesus ; and among these we behold many on the left hand of the judge, and hear the direful sentence against them ! Ah how insufficient are mere forms of religion ! Deceive not thyself, my dear Friend, but keep under thy body, lest, after having bore the name of a disciple or minister of Jesus, thou shouldst be a cast-away : But then,

Note, III. No man will be refused and cast out by the judge who is not found a servant of sin. The Apostle plainly promiseth himself, and those who follow his example, that in keeping under this body of sin, and bringing it into subjection, the Christian shall not be a cast-away : And the like assurance is given by the exalted Saviour to every one who subdues his corruptions, [Rev. iii. 21.] *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne.* None but the unrighteous shall he excluded the kingdom of heaven ; and accordingly the character of those, whom the Judge will reject, is expressly declared : To whom will Christ say, *Depart from me ?* To the workers of iniquity, [Matt. vii. 23.] And again, [Rev. xxi. 8.] we read that *the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone :* Nor shall the gates of

the

that he may not be a cast-away, &c. 17

the city be shut against any but the unjust and the filthy, for without are dogs and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie, [chap. xxii. 15.]

So that whatever appearances there are now, of this we are sure, that each *cast-away* will then be found guilty. Sinners may now cover their iniquity, and deceive men under a cloke of religion; but that day shall reveal their hypocrisy, when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, who will be justified when he pronounceth the curse on transgressors, and clear when he judgeth; yea, however the hypocrite may flatter his soul, he shall then be self-condemned, and own the justice of that sentence under which he is turned into hell with his blood upon his head; he may weep and wail, but he will have no cause of complaint, for his manifest vileness will shew the righteousness of God in his vengeance. Tremble, O ye wicked; and repent! But let not the humble or contrite person, who is mourning over and daily mortifying the deeds of the body, be dismayed: *Bebold, God will not cast away a perfect or upright man any more than he will help the evil doers,* [Job viii. 20.] Once more,

Note IV. Every man who would obtain the hope set before us in the gospel, must keep un-

der the body of sin. What is said of mankind in relation to natural death, may be applied to the subject before us ; there is no discharge in this war. Let us not be idle spectators, my Brethren, but followers of the Apostle, and fight against sin, that we may be accepted and crowned, for this is required. Is it reasonable to think that *Paul*, or that some only, are called to this self-denial in the way to glory ? Surely if any one might be excused from mortifying the flesh, it must be him that hath made the greatest advance in holiness : But where is the man, who, in this respect, will vie with the Apostle ? And who then can plead an exemption from, or be safe without keeping down himself in the manner he did ? You see then, my Friend, sin must be subdued if thou wilt be saved : Its impetuosity is more or less in different persons, and in the same subject at different times, but we have all a body of sin, the lusts of which continually war in our members ; it is therefore thy daily work, in this world, to keep under thy flesh, for unless thou bring it into subjection it will surely enslave thee, and the servant of sin will be a *cast-away*. Remember we are called unto holiness : the death of sin is no less needful than the death of Christ ; and a man may as justly expect to attain the fruition of heaven without

without the blood of the Saviour, as without the destruction of indwelling sin ; so that unless a man hath crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts, his notion of a crucified Jesus is vain. O be not deceived ! we *all* run, but *one*, i. e. one kind of professor receiveth the prize : and who is the man ? It is him, who, after the Apostle's example, keeps under his body, and perseveres to the end. This straight way the flesh cannot bear, but there is no other ; the road to heaven is an *highway of holiness* as well as a *way of free-grace* : I hope thou art the wayfaring-man who errs not therein ; however *this*, and this *only*, is the way to a meetness for glory, and the children of God shall be able to pass it. The believer shall, through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body till he hath gained a compleat victory and the old man is destroyed, for his Redeemer is able to keep him from falling, and to present him faultless before the presence of his glory with joy : in a word, here is a just portraiture of the real Christian ; compare thyself and be *faithful*. The man who is an utter stranger to the keeping under his body, is plainly in subjection to it, and hath no visible claim to the reward of the inheritance ; on the other hand, he who is conscious of striving against sin with a view to to destroy it, how-

ever imperfect, is truly sanctified and an heir of the kingdom. And this being the direct and immediate instruction of the place, I shall endeavour a further improvement upon it in pointing out,

I. The likeness of this draught to the circumstances of a Christian in his militant state.

II. What is essential to his keeping under his body : And,

III. By what means he is to pursue its final subjection.

I. With respect to the likeness. No wonder that a man, who had long fought himself, and who also was divinely inspired, should draw this picture to the life ; and that this is the case will appear by comparing it with the original. And,

*First*, Then you see that the enemy is in part subdued. He is under the hand of the person described. The Apostle doth not say, I bring, but I keep under my body ; so that the victory is already in a measure obtained, for the adversary is down. A man may resist and keep off his antagonist awhile, although he is unequal and in very great danger, but he that holds under the person with whom he is engaged, hath

plainly

plainly the advantage. And is it not thus with the Christian? Blessed be God, sin is dethroned; it is no longer the law of the mind; the old man is taken and crucified in him that is called; so that he can say, with my mind I serve the law of God, though, alas! with the flesh the law of sin: however grievous therefore the conflict of a Christian may be, his body is manifestly under; and this indeed appears from his honest and earnest opposition to the flesh; for the power of sin being seated in the heart, a genuine desire and sincere endeavour to subdue it, is in the very nature of the thing an undeniable proof that the subject is not a slave to his corruptions, but that he hath, in some degree, the mastery over them. Thus the believer's fighting against sin proves him free from its dominion, and shews that he hath already the advantage.

But then observe; the adversary is striving to recover. It plainly appears that this body would rise and regain the power it hath lost. If the enemy submitted and was quiet, what need this care to keep him still under? In like manner the Christian finds, by sorrowful experience, the flesh within him restless and full of rebellion; it ever struggles and is seeking to get an advantage; insomuch that he often bitterly complains that the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and is sometimes ready to cry out, as in

*Rom. vii. 24. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me!* Which leads to another instance.

Behold, the attempts of his enemy are threatening and bold! By this representation the Apostle points out how exceeding difficult it was for him to keep under his body: And, who finds it not so? Indwelling sin, though it hath lost its dominion, remains lively and strong, and its motions to rebel are often violent and dangerous: It impels with the force of a law in his members, and becomes highly impetuous, inasmuch that in some instances the poor Christian is ready to fear that it will, after all, prevail to his ruin. Thanks be to God, his fear shall not come, since his Redeemer is mighty; nevertheless it requires his utmost diligence, at all times, to hold down his enemy, and even then he is liable to distress, from his powerful motions.

But once again, mark, a superior strength in the champion. This is plain from his holding his antagonist under and beating him down. If all things considered, the enemy was strongest, he would certainly clear himself soon, and rising up again return all his blows with a vengeance. Something similar to this is found in the case of apostates: It is sometimes seen that persons are outwardly reformed through superficial and transitory convictions, and for awhile make a shew of religion, but

having

having no root in themselves, fall away ; the body of sin, restrained for a season, breaks forth with additional violence ; they return to their former lusts, and become more openly profane and licentious than ever. Not so the true Christian, in whom the dominion of sin is removed ; from an aversion to evil, and with a good hope through grace, he is heartily engaged in bringing his body into subjection, that his soul may be saved ; it is true he is weak in himself, but he is strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might ; his faith shall not fail ; he is therefore persuaded that sin shall not have dominion over him, but that at length it shall be completely subdued, hence he fights on with courage, and will not give place to the enemy, being certain of victory. Thus exact is the likeness of the figure under which the Apostle presents himself with that of the militant saint, in whom the power of sin is broken, and though often impetuous and sometimes alarming, yet it shall never be able to rise up again so as to enslave him, but shall be still more weakened, and in the end be totally destroyed. Happy is the man thus saved of the Lord !—And this is thy blessedness, O Christian ! fear not ; keep under thy body ; thou art more than a conqueror through him that hath loved thee.

S E R M O N

## SERMON II.

*The CHRISTIAN's concern that he  
may not be a cast-away, &c.*

I COR. ix. 27.

*But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away.*

**S**INCE the fall it is the misery of man to be born in sin, in which he lies dead, and unless quickened by grace, and delivered from the kingdom of darkness, he is utterly incapable of the experience mentioned in the text; he is indeed still a reasonable creature, and therefore liable to sore conflicts from the dictates of conscience; yet, being enslaved to corruption, on the most alarming attacks, he prepares to defend and not to destroy the flesh, to which he is devoted, and under some form will

will be fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind ; so then, it is absolutely impossible for the natural man to fight against sin.

But, when the sinner is converted the case is quite otherwise, the divine will being the law of his mind, a war immediately commences between that and the flesh, or the law of sin in his members ; and however the subject may falter and seem ready to faint, or even though he should be overtaken and fall, yet he will never stoop under, or be again in friendship with the body of death ; but animated with the love of God, an aversion to sin, and the prospect of glory, the Christian will continue to mortify the old man till his warfare is accomplished and he is called up to the throne of the Lamb : There stand the redeemed cloathed in white robes, and with palms in their hands, the emblems of victory, waiting the joyful day, when the righteous Judge shall crown all his saints, in the presence of his Father and his angels.

Of this spiritual warfare we have an instance in the text ; the Apostle is speaking of his own opposition to the flesh, and his zeal in subduing it ; this is set forth in terms which allude to a champion, who, having wrestled or fought with advantage, holds under his adversary, and gives him no quarter, but is resolved to bring him

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into a total and final subjection. Thus did he daily mortify himself, that he might not be a cast-away in the end.

From this striking representation, which is plainly with a view to excite all Christians to follow his example, several observations have been made; and among the rest, that whoever would obtain the hope set before him in the gospel, must keep under his body; the mystery of which hath been opened; and this being the leading idea of the passage, we have compared this draught with the circumstances of the militant Christian, and found a just and strong likeness.

II. It remains to consider what is essential to a man's keeping under his body, and by what means the believer attains it; which, with some reflections, will make up the ensuing discourse.

And *First*, What is implied in keeping under this body? Or, in other words, who answers the description before us? Not the man, we may be sure, who indulgeth to any known evil. A proud, covetous, unjust, or filthy person, may presume to call himself a disciple of Christ, but he deceives his own soul; for certain it is, *he that committeth sin is of the devil, [1 John iii. 8.]* Nor shall the unrighteous inherit the kingdom of

of God, [1 Cor. vi. 9.] I hope, my Friend, thou art not of this number: but, alas! how infatuated the drunken, or worldly-minded professor! How wretched the delusion of him, whose God is his belly, who assumes the character of a Christian in the open indulgence of sin and the pleasures of life. He pretends to be a *saint*, while he is plainly a *servant of sin*, and boasts of *salvation*, when, if the scriptures are true, his end is *destruction*. Such a man is saying within himself, *I have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine beart, to add drunkenness to thirst. The Lord will not spare him, but the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man,* [Deut. xxix. 19, 20.] Licentious professors are first-rate transgressors, and none are more certainly under the power of corruption, or in greater danger of ruin, than those who live in known evil under a form of religion. May such obtain grace to repent! But a nominal Christian, who riots with the world, and walks after the flesh, bears no likeness to this representation of the Apostle, but is at the utmost distance from conforming to his example.

He that keeps under this body, is so far from indulging to any thing immoral or wicked, that he is sparing and cautious in things that are lawful. *And every man that striveth for the mastery,*

ter, faith the apostle, is temperate in all things,  
ver. 25.

And Reader, if thou art a Christian, this is thy conduct; nor shall any man succeed against sin without self-denial. Not to insist on the many occasions of this for the sake of the gospel, and in condescension to others, which occur in the course of a christian profession, if a believer is not sparing of worldly enjoyments, and particularly in the pleasures of life, his body will surely get an advantage against him.

This forbearance seems nor agreeable to the popular taste, yet I presume to mention one excuse made by some for the liberties they take, which I think deserves censure; and it is this, namely, "That where there is no *sin*, there is no *shame*. Now, whatever of truth there may be in this proposition, when duly stated and guarded, it is shamefully applied when urged in favour of sensual indulgence, or a practice which borders on licentiousness. The man that will go the utmost length (he thinks he may run) is not very far from iniquity; he favours strongly of the flesh, and is not aware of his danger. The transition is easy from what is or may be thought lawful into that which is undoubtedly sinful; it therefore becomes the Christian, who would keep under his body, to deny himself daily,

daily, and let his moderation be known unto all men: in a word, the man who is heartily engaged against sin, in the manner described, will not only be far from licentiousness, and universally temperate, but he will even *abstain from all appearance of evil*, [1 Thess. v. 22.] he is afraid of the *shadow* of sin, and will not *symbolize* with them who walk after the flesh: Such is the purity of the gospel when it reacheth the heart! And indeed the appearance of evil is in favour of sin, and therefore not to be countenanced by him that is concerned to subdue it. However unsavoury or grievous to the flesh these things may be, they who walk after the spirit find delight in them, and this self-denial is needful. Perhaps some may be ready to cry out, and say, who then can be saved? But with God all things are possible, and his grace hath ever been sufficient to produce this effect in them that are called. We are now

III. To shew by what means the flesh is subdued in those who fear God. It hath already been hinted, that the strength of a Christian is not in himself; he goes forth in the name of the Lord, from whom he is supplied by the Holy Ghost, who sustaineth his heart, and teacheth his hand to fight against sin. And accordingly we read, [Rom. viii. 13.] *If ye, through*

*the*

*the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.* Nevertheless, the believer is active in the use of means, and in this spiritual warfare is exercised in the following manner :

*First,* In a *holy circumspection* of himself. Being sober, he is vigilant. It is easy to see that a man, who would keep under his body, must watch all its motions, lest, by any means, it breaks loose and riseth upon him to his hurt : We are therefore thus exhorted, [Prov. iv. 23.] *keep thine heart with all diligence.* Nothing is a greater disappointment to the flesh, or more effectually prevents its design, than a constant guard upon ourselves ; by this we may often discern its first motions, and as hath been observed, sin is a detestable creature, and endures not the inspection of a sanctified eye, so that a godly jealousy is one excellent means to check the risings of lust, and to render them impotent.

Add to this *prayer* : *Be sober and watch unto prayer,* [1 Pet. iv. 7.] These are frequently joined in scripture - exhortations. The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man, and especially his prayers against sin, availeth much to the destruction of its power : Praying in the spirit is of a humbling, and therefore of a sanctifying nature ; hence a maxim well known

that

that either *prayer* will make a man forsake *sin*, or the indulgence of *sin* will make him leave *prayer*. Wilful *sin* and earnest *prayer* will be found incompatible to the end of the world.

To *prayer* the saints have often joined *fasting*, as a means or manner of self-humiliation. This practice seems now laid aside, insomuch that there is reason to fear that the public fasts, appointed by authority, in a Christian land are for the most part a name, and comparatively none in the sight of the Lord! It is true the notion of *fasting*, in a religious way, hath been greatly abused, but all history, sacred and profane, shew that from the beginning it hath been frequently used by them who feared God. Indeed a pretence of authority to impose stated fasts of human prescription is arrogant, groundless, and vain; nor do I know of any fast appointed of God, under the present or former dispensation, except the day of atonement was one; and where there is no authority from God to command, there can be no obligation on the conscience to obey. This kind of humiliation no doubt hath always been voluntary and occasional; nevertheless the *Jews* kept annual fasts, which seemed not to displease the Most High, and certain it is that the faithful hath been accustomed, with acceptance, to abstain from natural

natural food, for a season, and thereby to chas-  
ten themselves before the Lord, on special occa-  
sions, either apart, or together. To evade this,  
by saying that Christians are only required to  
fast from sin, is ridiculous or worse; and to re-  
present proper and natural fasting as legal and  
carnal may sooth the flesh and please them who  
are given to sensual delights, but it contradicts  
scripture, and is an indecent reflection on the  
conduct, not only of the old testament saints,  
but also on those of the new, not excepting our  
Lord himself and his holy Apostles: In a  
word, this is to censure a custom which hath in  
all ages prevailed among the people of God, as  
circumstances required, in proportion to their  
piety, a custom which I am persuaded, with  
that of abounding in prayer its concomitant,  
will, however now despised or neglected, revive  
with the life and power of godliness. In the  
mean time some degree of abstinence in the pros-  
pect of spiritual exercises, is highly reasonable and  
proper; in all appearance a small denial of the  
body, might be an occasion of great advantage  
to the soul; and I hope it will give no offence  
that I take this opportunity of commanding  
moderation to my dear Christian friends, who  
are subject to drowsiness under hearing, and in  
other public devotions: In this self-denial I see

*that he may not be a cast-away, &c.* 33

no superstition, but rather a proof of an esteem for the words of God's mouth, more than our necessary food. But again,

*A seasonable recourse to the scriptures, is another method by which the saints have subdued their corruptions.* Thus our Saviour withstood the temptations of *Satan*: *It is written.* The word of God is the sword of the Spirit, to be handled no less against the flesh, than the devil. *Thy word, saith the Psalmist, have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee,* [Psal. cxix. 2.] And what is declared of a man in his youth, may be applied through the whole of his life, *Wherewith shall he cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word.* [ver. 9.] Had the word of God been regarded, sin had found no entrance into the world; and by a skilful and ready application of the word of the Lord, in the exercise of faith, the lusts of the flesh are kept under: And accordingly, when the *Colossians* are excited to mortify their members which are upon the earth, [chap. iii. 5.] it is followed with this divine exhortation, *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.* [ver. 16.] It is of great importance in this militant state to be well versed in the oracles of God, and ready in the scriptures of truth, not only for the admonishing of others, but also for our own defence

F

against

against the assaults of the flesh ; by how much the counsels of God abide and prevail in the heart, by so much are the imaginations of sin destroyed. In the testimonies of the Lord, is set forth the evil and bitterness of sin, and by these we are furnished with every argument against it, and warned of its subtleties : It is therefore greatly to be lamented, that so much time is employed by many in reading human compositions, and that on subjects purely natural and civil, to the neglect of the scriptures, from whence alone they can be furnished with weapons of warfare against the power of sin. Other writings are useful in their place, yea may be subservient to our spiritual advantage ; but it is melancholy to see with what eagerness some apply themselves to our daily productions, which are too often stuffed with vanity to the pampering of the flesh, and at best are for the most part but trifling, while they can scarce find time to read a chapter in the Bible, and are in a manner unarmed of the word of truth ; no wonder that they are carnal and sensual, and that the enemy gets an advantage and so easily prevails under every temptation ; but a delight in God's law is a noble defence against indwelling sin, and he that is much exercised therein, will find a happy

means

means of bringing it into subjection. And further,

*Separation from the world is needful.* By a separation from the world, I mean, a man's withdrawing himself from converse with the wicked. Religion is by no means unsocial, but quite the reverse; and the Christian must needs go out of the world if he will not be concerned with unbelievers, yet it belongs to the character of the godly, *not to stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful, but to be a companion of all them that fear God*, [Psal. i. 1. cxix. 63. compared.] Evil communications are corrupting; and he that will keep the commandments of his God must say, *Depart from me, ye evil doers*, [Psal. cxix. 115.] Many are the temptations to vain company, but if we comply, their ungodly discourse and practice will most surely excite, and give occasion to the passions of sin. So that he who would keep down the flesh must shun the conversation of the wicked. On the other hand,

*The communion of saints* is a grand appointment by which the enemy is defeated. In this divine fellowship a Christian obtains the assistance of others against his own flesh. The inspection of a faithful pastor, and the admonitions of a

church, are excellently adapted to promote holiness, and a growth in grace, in proportion to which the old man is crucified. *I run,* saith the Apostle, *not uncertainly*; i. e. as we have seen, not in a heedless manner, but with regard to the lines which are drawn for the course. In like manner there is an order of battle, which must be observed, if we would charge the enemy with advantage. The ordinances of the sanctuary are all levelled against the old man; even censures, when required, are *for the destruction of the flesh.* So that by this holy communion the believer is greatly strengthened in his opposition to sin; yea, and if at any time he is overtaken, and falls by a sudden and violent assault of the flesh, through a blessing on this order he is able to recover himself, and beat down the adversary again. A consideration, which among others, proves the folly of neglecting this divine institution.

It is indeed of little advantage to have only a name in the church; but the understanding, conscientious, and faithful professor, who delights in the assembly of the saints, whether occasionally present or absent, in consequence of his spiritual relation, considers himself at all times in the house of the Lord, from whence he argues against a compliance with the flesh: When tempted

tempted to evil he is ready to say, how shall I do this great wickedness and sin before my God, in whose sight I continually dwell? So then this sacred fellowship hath a natural tendency, and, through a divine blessing, is powerful to the keeping under the body in its most dangerous and subtil attacks: Shall the man who fears God omit an order appointed by him, as a means of that holiness without which he cannot enter into the kingdom of glory? Moreover,

*The exercise of evangelical repentance*, is another special means of subduing the flesh; godly sorrow, with genuine confession of sin, and self-abasement for it, through faith in the blood of Christ, and the righteousness of God in a free and full remission, is of a sanctifying nature, and greatly weakens the powers of corruption. There is not a penitential tear, which in this exercise flows from the broken and contrite heart, but what crucifieth the subject still more to the flesh, with its affections and lusts; hereby the motions of sin in the members are mortified. The Lord will fulfil the desire of the humble, and strengthen him to fight the good fight, with courage and joy: Thus penitent *David* riseth from his knees, triumphing in the Lord, and over his enemies: *Thou art my biding-place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble;*

*thou*

38 *The CHRISTIAN's concern*

*thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selab. [Psal. xxxii. 7.] In like manner he that abaseth himself shall be exalted! Besides,*

*Appropriating views of his exalted Saviour, animates the Christian in his opposition to sin, [Col. iii.] Set your affections on things which are above, where Christ is at the right hand of God. Mortify your members which are on the earth. And the same argument is frequently used to excite the faithful in pursuit after holiness: The Apostle styles it *looking to Jesus*, unto which he exhorts, [Heb. xii. 2.] It was this that inspired Moses to forsake the treasures of Egypt, and to flee from the most powerful temptations of the world; he chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. What a victory over the flesh! yea, though the terrors of a king was in the way, yet he feared not his wrath: But whence derived he this courage? What fortified him in the exercise of such severe self-denial? It is expressly declared, [chap. xi. 27.] *For he endured as seeing him who is invisible.* He beheld Christ afar off, who is the image of the invisible God, and who, as yet, had not been incarnate; and was persuaded of the glory that would follow his sufferings: Nor is there any difficulty in supposing*

*that he may not be a cast-away, &c.* 39

posing that his faith extended thus far, since *Abraham* before him saw his day, and this glory was revealed by the Prophets from the beginning; nor indeed could *Moses* have any rational ground of hope in the recompence of reward, unto which we are told he had respect, [ver. 26.] without a certain fore-sight of the Redeemer's entering into heaven, as the author of eternal salvation. Thus, in *Moses* we have a glorious instance of the influence which a prospect of Jesus hath, in mortifying the flesh, and if a believer at so great a distance from the coming of the Messiah, gained such a victory over himself, by looking forward to his glorified state in the heavens, how much more should a view of the Saviour, now he is actually risen from the dead, and ascended to the throne of his Father, prove a means of keeping under the body of sin? To this purpose also is the exhortation of Peter, [1 epif. iv. 1.] *Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered in the flesh*, i. e. as appears from the chapter preceding, suffered for sins, and, having so done, is gone into heaven, *arm yourselves likewise with the same mind, and no longer live the rest of your time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.* The prospect a believer hath in the death of his Saviour, of the evil of sin, and the infinite displeasure of God against it, is of great

service

service to the keeping under sin; and is effectual to the mortifying every inordinate affection: hence saith the Apostle, [Gal. vi. 14.] *God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me and I unto the world.* It is therefore plain that a view of Jesus by faith, who is crowned for the suffering of death, is of use in this spiritual engagement. And finally,

*An eye to the reward, and judgment to come,* will animate a man to keep under his body. This appears from the instance before us; for in this view the Apostle mortified his flesh, and brought it into subjection: He saw the prize set before him, and considered the end of his warfare; this animated his zeal against sin, that he might not be covered with shame, in the day of decision; *lest, faith he, by any means I myself should be a cast-away.* *Hold fast that thou hast; let no man take thy crown.* [Rev. iii. 11.] An eternal crown of glory and righteousness is the gracious assurance of the exalted Saviour to his saints, upon their obtaining the victory: Hence they who earnestly fight under his banner, exert themselves in holy fear, lest by any means they should seem to come short; so that forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching

that he may not be a cast-away, &c. 41

reaching forth unto the things which are before, they press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, [Phil. iii. 13,

14.] Blessed is the man, who obtains mercy to fight on in this manner, till the enemy is destroyed ! for thus saith the Amen, the faithful witness, *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.*

Thus we have seen the likeness of the representation under which the Apostle draws himself, and every one who is engaged in this spiritual warfare, who they are that answer the description, and by what means they keep down and mortify the enemy. The parts exactly agree with the situation of a Christian in reference to the body of sin, over which he hath already the advantage, yet his antagonist is struggling, yea, lively and strong, insomuch that his efforts are sometimes violent and threatening ; nevertheless, it is plain that the believer's strength is superior to that of his adversary ; not indeed in himself simply considered, but in virtue of his union with Christ, from whose inexhaustible fulness and grace all his members are supplied with strength to overcome. The man that answers to this, is so far from being in any degree licentious, that he is moderate in lawful enjoyments,

and shuns even the appearance of evil: And the means by which he maintains a successful opposition, are an holy watch, with fervent prayer, and a ready application to the word of God; in some instances abstinence from bodily food hath been used with advantage; withdrawing from the company of the wicked, cleaving to the communion of saints, and the exercise of self-humiliation before the Lord, are needful and profitable to the same purpose; to which we must add, appropriating views of the exalted Jesus, and a realizing prospect of the judgment to come, and the crown of glory which fadeth not away. By these various exercises in the divine life, the faithful in all ages have kept under their body, and mortified their members which are upon the earth, as the scriptures abundantly shew; and in the same manner will the righteous overcome to the end of the world.

And now, Brethren, if there is any propriety and importance in the conduct of the Apostle, if it be needful thus to keep under the body, and bring it into subjection, lest by any means, after having enjoyed the means of grace, and our profession of Christianity, we should be rejected and come short of the prize, what must become of many professors! and how melancholy the prospect! May it not be said with lamentation, and

and without any uncharitable comparison, Where are the symptoms of this self-denial? Do the generality of nominal Christians, in any tolerable measure, conform to the example before us? are they circumspect, holy and spiritual, in their conversation? and do they live as those who watch against sin, and keep in view the judgment of the Lord at his appearance and kingdom? Alas! it cannot be denied but that a careless, wanton, and disorderly spirit too much prevails, in direct opposition to that self-denial which belongs to the life of a Christian. Be not offended: the increasing sensuality among us hath a threatening aspect, and calls for loud warning. Carnal company, and the pleasures of sense are in fashion; a manner of life which leaves no room for those spiritual exercises whereby the body of sin is subdued. Hence some daily decline from the appearance of the *life* and *power* of godliness, and seem ready to yield up the *form*; therefore let us beware: If *Paul* stood in need of such pains and self-denial, what must become of the man, who, after having declared in his baptism, an hope of the old man's being crucified that it might be destroyed, and that he is risen with Christ to walk in newness of life, is yet notoriously conformed to this world, in its pride and pleasure, and abounds in the vanities of life,

which pamper the flesh, and strengthen the habits of sin? Is such an one like to bring his body into subjection? or being found the servant of corruption, will the name of a Christian, *save* or *condemn* him? can any thing be expected but that sin, so hardly held under by the watchful and self-mortifying believer, should finally overcome a licentious professor, and that he should in the end be a cast-away? Far be it that either of us should be under the fatal deception, to conceit that we are called of God, and in the way to heaven, while we are strangers to an holy self-denial, and to the opposing of indwelling sin. He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; and if any one is hardened in this way, he may evade or defy the just censures of men, but he shall not escape the judgment of God, and doth well to consider how he will endure the shame and everlasting contempt of being a cast-away in the day of Christ, among the wicked, to whom the Judge shall say, *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*

When iniquity abounds, and the love of many waxeth cold, under a profession of christianity, there is need to guard the hearers of the word, against deceiving themselves by the means they enjoy, while in a course of negligence and

and sin. A true believer, being dead to sin, cannot live any longer therein; but the natural man is prone to conceit he is safe, under a speculative notion of the truth, without any concern to mortify his body, which in the end will prove fatal. We live in a day of clear gospel-light, which shines through a cloud of errors, advanced by the enemy, against the foundation of God, which stands sure; and there is reason to fear, that this very light is an occasion to some, through the vanity of their minds, unto their flattering themselves in the darkness of sin to their ruin. I hope that the number is few, and that I speak to none such; but some boast in their superior knowledge, and seem to have clear ideas of truth: would to God that their evidences of being under the influence of its grace, were as clear! But, alas, in all appearance, they are not yet taught to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, being careless in their walk, as if the security of a believer in Christ was an encouragement to sloth and disorder, or to render the faithful indifferent about sin, and the duties of religion. Art thou tempted, my Friend, to argue from the perseverance of the saints, or from any other doctrine of grace unto carnal security? Remember that no man, who

*never so lightly sli* . . . *walks*

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walks after the flesh, hath a visible claim to the character of being in Christ.

This labour of the Apostle to keep under his body, also reproveth those who are perpetually carping at their neighbours in the neglect of themselves. No doubt one branch of christian communion is to watch over, and warn one another in love: we are by no means to suffer sin on our brother; but it hath ever been found that some nominal Christians spend their time as if their duty was to keep under, not their *own* body, but the body of *others*. These sort of persons are inviduously prying into, and censoriously reflecting on the conduct of this and the other professor, if not questioning their state, when at the same time their own spirit and conduct is unbecoming the gospel, and layeth them under a too just suspicion. How vain are such men, and how different from the example in the text! Do I speak to any one thus foolishly employed? Deluded professor; take heed to thyself! keep under thine own body and bring it into subjection, lest, after thy censure of others, thou thyself should be a cast-away. Know that in this spiritual conflict the engagement is personal; and that if a man, under the highest pretence to christianity, subdueth not himself, his religion is vain.

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On the other hand, how should this example animate the Christian! Be not discouraged, O thou humble and afflicted sinner, who art really engaged with this enemy! It is true, he is vigorous and active, and it may be threatens thee hard, nevertheless rejoice that he is under thine hand; he that hath redeemed thee from the power of this body, and hath hitherto preserved thee from falling a prey to its lusts, will never fail or forsake thee, or suffer it to regain its dominion; therefore be of good courage; fight on, and give the adversary no quarter, shew sin no mercy, who seeks thy destruction; be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might; the Almighty is thy defence, the sword of thine excellency and the shield of thy strength: What though the enemy cometh in like a flood, and under any temptation sin takes occasion to work in thee all manner of concupiscence, and its lustings are vehement, thy Redeemer is near, and his grace is sufficient; through God thou shalt do valiantly, and tread on the neck of this adversary, who, like *Satan* himself, shall be shortly bruised under thy feet; therefore fear not, nor let the world amuse or decoy thee: What are all its enjoyments, the transitory pleasures of sin, or the honour that cometh from men, compared with the joy set before thee? Behold the Judge, with

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with the prize, stretching forth the right hand of his righteousness; and hearken to the words of his grace: *Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.*

And is it so? In His best state here must the Christian keep under his body: And is his own flesh a painful and dangerous enemy? Who would live always? Under this consideration death itself is desirable to the believer, who by this change is delivered from inbred corruption. *Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.* Unclothed of this body, they are divested of sin; their warfare is at an end, and they have finished their course; no more shall they meet with any disturbance, but are in perfect tranquility, and in the presence of God are satiated with fulness of joy, waiting a triumph over death, in their redemption from the grave.

In the mean time let this exhibition which the Apostle makes of himself to the faithful, teach us what manner of persons we regard as servants of the Lord; namely, those only who go before the people in their practice. This lesson of instruction is not to be omitted. It is an awakening truth; but it appears from the scripture, as hinted in the text, that in the day of judgment Christ will cast away, as workers of iniquity, even of those who have prophesied in

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*that he may not be a cast-away, &c* 49

his name ; and it is awful to think that some, who preach to others, live as if they cared not for themselves, but mind earthly things, and are notorious for doing the works of the flesh ! How hardened and miserable the wretch, who, for sinister ends, is employed in publishing the word of salvation, and at the same time walks on with them whose end is destruction ! But besides the fearful consequence, with respect to himself, the interest of religion greatly suffers by any countenance given to vain persons, who assume to themselves this sacred character. “ The life of a Minister, saith the great Dr. Owen, must be vocal.” Christians of every rank are to be examples of piety, and a good conversation ; but the holiness of men, who are admitted into the office of teachers, is more especially an ordinance of God for the edification of his people, and of the utmost importance.

If there is any reason in the text, Beloved, you are not only to *bear what your preachers say*, but likewise to *observe what they do* : Follow no man merely because he can talk ; if a man hath the tongue of an angel he is not to be encouraged, unless he keeps under his body. Nothing is more clearly and frequently insisted on in the word of God than this, that ministers be exam-

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plies to the flock; nor do I know of a more melancholy and dangerous symptom, on a body of professors, than that of their being given up to dispense with the moral good conversation of those they attend. I heartily wish there was no want of regard to this essential point in the conduct of some in our day. God forbid that this spirit should prevail, for then we are undone! pure religion must die in our hands. It is a contradiction to the gospel, and what tends to the most hardened infidelity and unbounded licentiousness, when, under any pretence, men wantonly presume, against the express direction of the Holy Ghost, to care for those as his ministers, who are not of good report, or in some degree plainly an example of the doctrine they teach. If then you have any concern for promoting true godliness, and a flourishing state of the church, let no man who defileth his garments be received in the name of the Lord, or held in reputation as a minister of Christ.

Finally, Brethren, may this example be ever before us! Behold, my dear Reader, how the Apostle fought with his body that his soul might be saved! and is not thy soul as precious to thee? In like manner then beat down thy flesh; deny thyself, and avoid the shame and contempt of being rejected at last; be not slothful,

ful, but diligent in the use of every means in thy power, and carefully shun whatever tends to give the enemy an advantage; be sober and watch unto prayer; treasure up the word of the Lord, and let thy moderation be universally known; make those who fear God thy chosen companions, and daily humble thyself: in a word, engage in this warfare looking to Jesus, and having respect to the recompence of reward, persevering therein to the end. O that each one, whether preacher or hearer, so keeping under his body and bringing it into subjection, may by no means be a *cast-away*, but that his faith, being found unto praise and honour, and glory at the coming of Christ, he may obtain the approbation of the righteous Judge, and receive at his hands the crown he will give in that day to all them that love his appearing! So shall we exceedingly rejoice before the presence of his glory, and, being heirs of salvation, inherit together the kingdom prepared for the blessed of the Father, from the foundation of the world.

F I N I S.

E R R A T U M.

Page 46, line 15, for *their* read *his*.

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